

Women's groups to lobby against new games

By Jacquie Miller

Citizen staff writer

The U.S. manufacturer of a recently banned video game depicting the rape of an Indian woman says he plans to sell two similar video games in Canada in the next few weeks.

But women's groups that successfully pressured the federal government to ban the Custer's Revenge game say they'll lobby against the new games, which have already been approved for sale here.

Custer's Revenge depicts a naked General Custer dodging Indian bullets to reach and rape an Indian maiden tied to a stake. Public criticism that it was racist, violent and sexist prompted Canadian customs officials to reverse a decision to allow it to be sold in Canada.

But two other games produced by American Multiple Industries Inc. in North Ridge, Calif., were approved for sale in Canada by customs officials along with Custer's Revenge in October.

All three games, marketed under the slogan "When you score you

score," have been under fire from women's groups in the United States and Canada since being introduced this fall.

One of the games depicts an exhibitionist standing on a tenement building ejaculating onto women below.

The other game is called Bachelor Party and shows a man chasing women around the screen. The women disappear from the screen when he catches them and a point is scored.

"I'm just amazed they let these things in," said Jillian Riddington, an executive with the National Action Committee on the Status of Women, the largest women's group in Canada.

She said she'll talk to other women's groups and a campaign against the games will probably start soon.

"They both sound like they advocate violence against women and equate it with sexual pleasure. These games are not about sex; they're about violence and degradation of women."

Riddington said the women want to prevent the video games from entering Canada because it's harder to fight them once they're being sold.

"We'd like to nip this in the bud," she said.

An official with the Voice of Women, which also played a key role in the campaign against Custer's Revenge, said that group will likely resume letters and telephone complaints about the games to federal ministers responsible for customs and the status of women.

"It was effective in that it stopped one game," said Kay Macpherson.

"I guess we'll just have to bombard the ministers again. If Custer's Revenge was withdrawn, I guess these can be too."

"It really is shocking that it should even be considered to have this kind of stuff around."

Stuart Kesten, president of American Multiple Industries Inc., says he's still considering whether to launch a court appeal of the ban on Custer's Revenge in Canada.

He says he can't understand what all the fuss is about, and that many of the people complaining have never even seen the games.

Kesten says the games are "parodies" meant for adults only.

"Custer's Revenge no more promotes violence against women than PacMan promotes cannibalism."

The three games are already available in about 7,000 video, record and computer accessory stores in the United States. Kesten expects to sell 500,000 of the \$49.95 cartridges before the end of the year.

The introduction of Custer's Revenge in the U.S. sparked a wave of protest, including demonstrations, petitions and picketing of stores where it's sold.

The Atari computer company is suing American Multiple Industries for trademark infringement because Custer's Revenge is advertised as being usable with the Atari home video computer.

In turn, Kesten is suing the Suffolk County, N.Y., county council, which asked retailers not to sell the game.